

In The Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A motor vehicle comprising:
a body having a front end, a rear end and a roof; a plurality of wheels coupled to said body;
a rear structural member located at said rear end of said body;
a trailer hitch attached to said structural member;
a pair of brackets attached to said structural member and spaced a predetermined distance apart;
a rear bumper configured to both cover said structural member and to allow for access to said brackets; and
a step pivotally coupled to said brackets and operative to articulate about an axis between [[a]] first and second position positions, with said brackets being attached to said structural member such that said trailer hitch is operational when said step is in either of said first or second positions.
2. (Original) A motor vehicle according to claim 1, wherein said rear structural member is formed with said brackets integral therewith.
3. (Original) A motor vehicle according to claim 1, wherein said brackets are independent pieces and are attached to said rear structural member by one of welding, bolting, and riveting means.
4. (Original) A motor vehicle according to claim 1, wherein said brackets extend a predetermined distance from said structural member and said bumper.
5. (Original) A motor vehicle according to claim 1, wherein said step is u-shaped having two leg members, with one of said leg members each attached to each of said brackets, and a planar member disposed between said leg members and wherein said planar member has a first side and a second side.
6. (Original) A motor vehicle according to claim 5, wherein said planar member is substantially vertically oriented when said step is in said first position, and substantially horizontally oriented to provide a step when in said second position.

7. (Original) A motor vehicle according to claim 5, wherein said first side of said step provides a stepping surface when said step is in said second position and wherein said first side includes a plurality of traction improving grooves extending perpendicular to said axis for the length of said planar member.

8. (Original) A motor vehicle according to claim 5, wherein said leg members are contoured to render said step flush with said bumper when said step is in said first position.

9-10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) A motor vehicle according to claim 1, further comprising a lockout mechanism for said step.

12. (Original) A motor vehicle according to claim 11, wherein said lockout mechanism is a spring loaded sliding lockout key comprising:

a sliding pin having a first and second end; a handle attached to the first end of said pin; a spring positioned on the second end of said pin; and

a retainer positioned on said second end of said pin operative to hold said spring in place.

13. (Withdrawn) A step for use with a motor vehicle comprising:

a pair of brackets configured for coupling to a motor vehicle, each of said brackets having a first sleeve adapted to permit rotational mounting of a step thereto; and

a u-shaped member comprising a pair of legs, with each of said legs having a first and second end, and a planar member disposed therebetween at said second end of said legs, with each of said legs also having a second sleeve located at said first end and configured for mating with said first sleeves of said brackets, and wherein said u-shaped member is operative to articulate about an axis between a first and second position once said u-shaped member is coupled to said brackets.

14. (Withdrawn) A step according to Claim 13, wherein said legs are contoured in order to be flush with a bumper of a motor vehicle when said step is in an "up" or stowed position.

15. (Withdrawn) A step according to Claim 13, wherein said planar member has a first side and a second side, and wherein said first side includes a plurality of traction improving grooves extending the length of said planar member from one of said legs to the other of said legs.

16. (Withdrawn) A step according to Claim 13, further comprising a lockout mechanism.

17. (Withdrawn) A step according to Claim 13, wherein said lockout mechanism is a spring loaded sliding lockout key comprising: a sliding pin having a first and second end;

a handle attached to the first end of said pin;
a spring positioned on the second end of said pin; and
a retainer positioned on said second end of said pin operative to hold said spring in place.